Increase in Defence Budget

1314. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made heavy defence allocations in the current year's Budget as compared to the last three years' Budget;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for such a massive increase?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) In the General Budget 2004-2005, the allocation for Defence Services has been kept at Rs. 77000 crores. The provision made in the budget for Defence expenditure during the last three years has been as under:

(Rs. in crores)

	Budget Estimates	Revised Estimates	Actual Expenditure
2001-2002	62000.00	57000.00	54265.73
2002-2003	65000.00	56000.00	55661.83
2003-2004	65300.00	60300.00	60065.80 (P)

(P) Provisional

(c) The provision for the defence expenditure in Budget Estimates 2004-2005 has been made to meet the obligatory charges, essential maintenance requirement, committed liabilities and a few prioritised new schemes.

Defence Secretary talks between India and Pakistan

1315. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Pakistan had held Defence Secretary level talks in the month of August focusing on proposals of military de-escalation on Siachen glacier;

(b) if so, whether both India and Pakistan exchanged new proposals;

(c) whether both Defence Secretaries of India and Pakistan picked up where two sides had left last time in 1998;

(d) if so, what were the proposals discussed and to what extent talks were fruitful and whether any agreement was reached and signed; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) The Defence Secretaries of India and Pakistan held talks in New Delhi on 5-6 August, 2004 on Siachen, within the framework of the Composite Dialogue. During the meeting, modalities for disengagement and redeployment of troops were discussed. The two sides agreed to continue with their discussions.

Leakage of Question Paper at Ranchi

1316. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the question paper for the recruitment of naval personnel under the Matric Direct Recruitment Scheme leaked in October last at Ranchi;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Defence Personnel are suspected to have been involved in the paper leakage; if so, at what level and the action taken/proposed to be taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The local office of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at Ranchi reportedly unearthed a racket in which some questions of the Question Paper of the Matric Direct Recruitment Scheme examination were found in the possession of some civilian personnel.

(c) The matter is under investigation by the CBI and the Navy's Board of Inquiry.